

# Ethel Barrymore's Latest Cruel Disappointment

**Her Romance Shattered, Now Her Always  
Disappointed Old Father-  
in-Law Strips Her Even of the  
Home She Loved  
and Which He  
Had Promised  
Should Be All  
Her Own**

**T**HE path of womanhood leads sometimes through pleasant places, but sooner or later it lies along the river of tears. The life story of Ethel Barrymore, loveliest and most popular actress on the American stage, is proof of this universal truth. A recent event has emphasized the fact that she who has portrayed the sorrows of many women on the stage has herself had a generous portion of heartache. She who has made thousands weep has herself shed many tears.

At the time this is written it is probable that she will lose the home which was dear to her as her heart's core. Kipling sensed to some degree what such a blow means, for he wrote "Nobody else knows what a woman's house means to her." At Mamaroneck, on the north shore of Long Island Sound, is the large, white, four-story house, set upon heavily wooded acres, that Miss Barrymore regarded as her home. For this she had every valid reason save a deed. She had the promise of one of the foremost business men and organizers in this country, her father-in-law, who died last month.

He was Colonel Samuel Pomeroy Colt, chairman of the Executive Board of the United States Rubber Company, head of the rubber trust and known as the Rubber King.

When, twelve years ago, Miss Barrymore secretly wedded Russell Griswold Colt, son of the Rubber King, Colonel Colt was not at the wedding. Charlotte Fairchild, the photographer, and her then husband, John Fairchild, were the only guests. But Colonel Colt seemed to pardon this omission. While in the circles closest to him it was known that he would have preferred a member of some family as old as his own, which traces back to the authenticated passengers on the Mayflower, one in exclusive Boston or Knickerbocker society, he met his famous daughter-in-law with a smile. As a token of his acceptance of her he tendered her the house at Mamaroneck.

"Live in it; enjoy it," he is quoted as saying, "and some day I shall deed it to your family."

To the open nature of the gifted actress there was no ambiguity in the terms of this gift. Her father-in-law had said that some day the home should be hers. So she understood. It was enough.

Thereafter she poured the surplus of her season's earnings into the home. A huge house it was, with acres rolling gently toward the Sound. Its year-round upkeep required large sums. As owners of country places know improvements upon them require large expenditures. So far as outward evidences go for a long time it is as though the owner had tried to make a funnel contain water, or quicksand sustain a corner stone.

Into this white frame house, with its square cupola and upon the sloping grounds with their forests of century-old trees Miss Barrymore poured and poured her earnings. A squad of men was kept busy trimming the great trees. Another cutting the grass and weeding the flower beds and keeping the vegetable gardens in productive mood. There were three motor cars, accessories of the house. To keep the great house in condition and to pay for the numerous alterations which her taste and the gradual decay of an old house demanded made a heavy drain upon her resources.

Came, then, serious illness, which ended her prosperous season in "Decease" almost before it had begun, and made necessary a long stay in two hospitals. Occurred the culmination of a long series of differences with her husband, which began in a separation two years after their marriage, and developed even through several reconciliations and repeated efforts to keep the matrimonial ship in smooth waters.

"Her husband has been too gay all through their marriage. That has been the trouble from the first," said her manager,

Ethel Barrymore Colt  
with Her Three  
Charming Children.



The Late Mr. Colt.



Ethel Barrymore in One of Her Stage Roles.

whom she had authorized to speak for her. In March her attorney announced that Miss Barrymore "had definitely separated her life from that of her husband, Russell Griswold Colt. Mrs. Barrymore Colt has the sole care, custody, control and education of the three children. Mr. Colt has the opportunity of companionship with the children, subject to the arrangements and convenience of their mother, and the health, physical conditions and studies of the children as determined by her."

Instead of going to her beloved home of twelve years at Mamaroneck, N. Y., Miss Barrymore went to a family hotel of moderate price and took up anew her life with the children, from whom she had been parted by her tour and by her illness. Neighbors of hers at Mamaroneck did not see her again in the large white house among the trees.

Nor were the children seen playing among the trees nor dipping in the surf of the Sound, as they had done each summer of their brief lives. They remained in the city or were guests of their grand-uncle, John Drew, at the Drew Summer home at Easthampton, Long Island. But Russell Griswold Colt was often seen motoring between the great square gateposts of the old stone wall up the gravelled road to the porte cochere. To the house that had been the scene of his honeymoon he

returned alone. Yet it was apparent that he held those nine points of the law implied in possession.

So far as the house at Mamaroneck was concerned, Miss Barrymore was homeless. A woman by long residence there builds herself into a house. Her soul pulses through it. Through its rooms trail the ghostly robes of her spirit. Memories of her exude from its walls. While, therefore, Russell Griswold Colt seems to be alone in the big house he is not alone.

Rumors flew along Broadway that despite her tremendous popularity and her successively successful seasons Miss Barrymore was out of funds last Summer. Although she required rest she made an excursion into vaudeville. It was said by sympathizers privileged to see her often that she even considered that last stand at the financial ditch for a start—going into a season of Summer stock.

"Why should Miss Barrymore's bank account be low?" asked those who know well their Broadway. "Her tours are always money-makers. She has earned in the last three seasons \$125,000."

Replied those who were in the confidence of members of the family: "Don't forget the place at Mamaroneck. It has been the sinking sand of all her surplus. And now it looks as though she will never get it." It is the last of many disappointments

Ethel Barrymore  
(Mrs. Russell Colt);  
Perhaps the  
Greatest of American  
Actresses.

that have befallen the much-beloved actress—one more of the turns in her life path that led along the river of tears. Her first grief was that turn of the family fortunes which required her to forego her ambition to become a great pianiste. Instead, she went upon the stage. "Not because I wanted to," she said. "I had to earn my living."

Her second was when her witty, talented mother, Georgie Drew Barrymore, died. Her thirteen-year-old daughter had been her companion in Mrs. Barrymore's health quest in California and was with her when she died. The bereft girl accompanied her mother's body East, making the journey alone, until her father met her in Chicago. The brilliant matinee idol himself died a few years later in tragic circumstances at an asylum for clouded intellects at Amityville.

The death of Charles Frohman, her manager, who sank with the Titanic, was a heavy blow, as was that of Alf Hayman.

Grief was her portion at the sudden collapse of her younger brother, John Barrymore, while playing "Richard III," a portrayal that marked the highest peak in his career.

His subsequent illness, occasioning a long absence from the stage, was a poignant disappointment to her. For Miss Barrymore has not only the genius of motherhood, although her devotion to her children is one of her most conspicuous traits.

It caused her to remain in the hospital with her daughter Ethel when the child was a dithyrambic patient. She remained at the child's bedside despite warning of the fate that befell Princess Alice of England, who died for a motherly kiss upon the lips of her royal child stricken by diphtheria. As strong as her love for her children is her sisterly affection for John and Lionel Barrymore.

A bitter blow at this devotion was the reception of the press and the public to Lionel Barrymore's portrayal of Macbeth last season.

The separation from her husband was the final point of a long chapter in her life punctuated by many points of anguish. And now, the house at Mamaroneck, into which she bled so much of herself in twelve years, it seems, is lost to her.

They who have observed the life of the "Rubber King," brought to a close last month by a stroke of paralysis, say that the shadow of his disappointments has fallen upon her.

Colonel Samuel Pomeroy Colt, though a masterful man, a captain of industry, a genius of organization and a multi-millionaire, knew the sting of defeated hopes. He who seemed supremely successful had tasted the gall of failure.

His marriage to Miss Elizabeth Bullock, though encircled by the halo of romance at the beginning, was a failure that long engaged the activities of the Rhode Island courts. Each sued the other for divorce. Colonel Colt named the late James Van Alen as co-respondent, alleging that the Newport beau's bicycle visits to Providence, the home of the Colts, were prompted by his admiration for Mrs. Colt. He sued him for alienation of his wife's affections and asked \$200,000 for the heart which he had lost, and he believed, to Mr. Van Alen.

The fight was a long and bitter one, which was removed from the courts and ended in a private settlement. The man who could organize a Rubber Trust in one of the greatest industries, and whose influence caused the Government to send a battleship to his home at Bristol for the celebration of a one hundredth family anniversary, was yet unable to hold his family whole and happy.

In politics he was not more successful than in his love. Having conquered in the world of finance he became ambitious to shine in politics. Twice he was defeated for United States Senator from Rhode Island. First, in a deadlock in the Legislature; second, when in pique at the slight showing of strength before the battle, he withdrew his name. Similarly he was defeated for Governor of Rhode Island.

That his son, Russell Griswold Colt, showed little liking for the rubber business which he had organized was another disappointment to the Rubber King. He wanted to make him the Rubber Prince and the young man showed more than a disinclination for the honor.

When he felt the mantle of age dropping slowly but surely about his shoulders and enwrapping him in its inescapable folds he sought the consolations of merry company. The cheery folk of Broadway, the artists and models of the studios, singers from the opera house and the dilettante that were their satellites might make him forget that he was growing old. Laughter might deafen him to the tread of the marching years.

He bought much of the furniture and other effects of the late Stanford White. He emptied the Madison Square Tower of



Russell Griswold Colt, from Whom  
Ethel Barrymore Was Separated  
and Who Is Now Occupying the  
Place She Loves So Well.

its luxurious trappings, with its inseparable associations of the tragedy that occurred beneath the tower when Harry Thaw shot his own wife to death. He practically reproduced the tower's aspect in his home, at No. 17 East Forty-fourth street, near Canfield's former gambling palace. From this setting he sent invitations to the light-heeled, merry-hearted folk of Broadway and their satellites.

But the invitations were seldom accepted!

Instead of ringing with laughter the house echoed to the master's slow tread. In his dying hours in that house which meant so much to him did he think of the celebrated daughter-in-law to whom the house at Mamaroneck meant as much. Probably not. For it was known that in the differences which ended in the separation of last March he sympathized with his son. "I stand with my boy," he said one day in the club.

A few have hoped that he might leave the house at Mamaroneck to his grandchildren, or at least to his namesake, Samuel Colt. In that case Ethel Barrymore might still be chatelaine of the estate which has nearly impoverished her. Oh! she would, at best, be only the dowager queen. But he bequeathed it to his son, the husband from whom, six months ago, she was separated. Russell Griswold Colt's chivalry seems to be the only hope of saving the home she loved for her.